2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

In the range of hills described as visible from Kaimak, there is a mine or vein of iron ore, about a mile due west from the brook, and marked by a large mass of white quartz. This is used by the Indians in the manufacture of bolas, and an excursion was made to it. We brought back numerous pieces, some of which, now in my possession, have been examined, and pronounced to be brown and magnetic iron ore. The Indians also told me that some leagues to the east of this spot a mass of iron, having, as well as could be gathered from their account, the shape of a bar-shot, lies in the middle of a barren plain, and is regarded by them with superstitious awe. Whether this be an aërolite, or has any connection with the ore on the hill side, it was not in my power to determine, for in the critical state of feeling then prevalent a visit of inspection was impracticable.

On the 22nd of October we marched a few miles, always following the line of hills, and in a northerly course. Ostrich eggs still formed the main staple of food, and furnished a diet sufficiently nutritious, but producing all the effects of a course of 'Banting.' Fortunately this day two of us killed fat pumas, some steaks off which broiled, by way of variety, were an acceptable addition to the evening meal; but from experience I should advise all travellers to boil their puma. We encamped in a small gorge in the hills, directly under a peculiarly pointed rock, which is called Yowlel, or Ship Rock, from its resemblance to a ship under sail, and is regarded with superstition by the Indians, who believe that all who endeavour to ascend it in the calmest weather will, on arriving at the summit, have their mantles blown to pieces by furious gusts of wind.

The next day—a glorious morning, after a night's rain—we proceeded in the same direction; and while waiting for the heavy baggage, in the shape of the women and children, several of us repaired to a regular racecourse—a beaten track six feet wide, extending for almost three miles, level and free from stones, though rather sandy. Here we had trials of the

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
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met with. Another superstition is that a two-headed guanaco exists in the south, the appearance of which is a forerunner of sickness. According to my informant, after its last appearance measles, or a similar disease, decimated the Southern tribe, the disease having been propagated by communication with Punta Arenas, where it was at that *time rife*. Any unfamiliar object that they do not comprehend, as, for instance, a compass or a watch, is regarded with suspicion as being tenanted by an evil spirit. Sometimes these objects are supposed to bring luck at play, and are eagerly sought for. One of my companions was possessed of a watch, obtained in Punta Arenas, and, before playing cards, he would often ask me to set it going, the ticking being regarded as the voice of the hidden Gualichu. My compass was also in constant demand, but the privilege of temporary possession was necessarily restricted to a few favoured friends. I explained, to the best of my power, the use of this instrument, which was comprehended by many of them; and they became very fond of asking me to point out the precise direction of various points known to them, and were greatly delighted at the correctness with which their inquiries were generally satisfied. A locket, worn by me round my neck, was also regarded as a talisman, securing the wearer from death.

With all this superstition, regard for omens, and belief in demons, they by no means accord implicit faith and respect to the wizards. Nor do they trust to their spells alone in case of disease; many possess an acquaintance with medicinal herbs, and apply them with good effect. Besides being good farriers, they practise blood-letting, not only on the sick, but, like our grandfathers, at regular seasons have themselves blooded, believing it to be beneficial. Casimiro declared that the superior health of the Tehuelches, compared with that of the colonists or Christians, was attributable to this practice. They also understand and sometimes employ poisons, not to envenom their weapons, but for secretly taking off an enemy. Such cases are rare, but

5: Bourne T-5 (1849)1874
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484 On the present occasion the movement was delayed, while we rode in search of something to eat. The chase was unsuccessful, scarcely enough being obtained to more than sharpen our appetites for dinner. The scanty meal being over, the whole company began their journey, which *in its tortuous windings was not unlike that of the* Israelites in the wilderness, but unlike that in the respect that we seemed to have no particular destination or object, except to explore new hunting-grounds, and gratify the capricious restlessness of the Indians. One very desirable end was answered, — we got enough to eat, as we were successful in killing a large quantity of game. The Indians [823] it was noticeable, were never at a loss to find their camps. So familiar did they seem with all their haunts and the general shape of the country, that though the surface presented to my eye scarcely any distinguishable way-marks, they would strike off from any point, however distant, and go with unerring aim straight to their tents. In returning laden with booty to our new homes, I was surprised to observe no indications whatever of water in the vicinity, a singular departure, at first sight, from their invariable custom, so far as I had noticed. Very soon the squaws issued from their huts, each with her leathern bucket. Curiosity prompted me to follow them a little way, when a spring was discovered, from which they had to dip the water with their ox-horn cups till the buckets were filled.

584 About this time a new phase of life presented itself, to cast light on an important item of the social economy established in Patagonia. Looking out of our wigwam one evening just at dusk, I noticed an unusual concourse of Indians about two hundred yards distant. There were